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NATO Study Finds Warsaw Pact Leads In Most Weaponry

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The Soviet-led Warsaw Pact enjoys numerical superiority over the United States and its West European allies in almost every category of nuclear weaponry and conventional forces, according to a study issued yesterday by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Information in the 70-page report is not new but a compilation of declassified intelligence information and other statistics obtainable piecemeal from various official and academic sources.

However, the report represents NATO's most ambitious attempt to assemble in one document a comprehensive, declassified comparison of the East-West forces confronting each other in Europe.

As such, it is likely to provide ammunition for debates raging in this country and Western Europe about whether the Atlantic Alliance countries should accede to calls for a "nuclear freeze" or seek to bolster their defenses through increased military budgets and such strategic moves as the deployment of U.S. intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Western European bases.

The White House cited the report as proof of President Reagan's contention that the West must greatly strengthen its collective defenses to deal with the Soviets from a credible position of strength.

Deputy press secretary Larry Speakes said Reagan "believes strongly the reversal of this dangerous trend is essential if we are to safeguard the interests of the United States and its allies and to provide the incentive to the Soviet Union to negotiate a stable military balance at reduced levels of force."

Speakes added: "The president welcomes the contribution that this NATO paper makes to public understanding of the balance."

According to the study, the Soviets have 600 intermediate-range missiles capable of hitting targets in Western Europe, while NATO will have none that can strike into the Soviet Union until the scheduled deployment next year of the new generation Pershing and cruise missiles.

NATO has 800 aircraft capable of nuclear attacks on Eastern Europe, compared with 2,500 similar planes on the Warsaw Pact side. However, NATO has a slim 1,100-to-950 edge in short-range nuclear missiles and tactical nuclear artillery.

In long-range, strategic nuclear delivery systems, the Soviets have a combined missile and bomber total of 2,704, compared with 2,022 on the western side, the report said.

In compiling these figures, the report did not include the forces of France, which, although a NATO member, has withdrawn from participation in the unified NATO military command and operates on its own. Also not included are U.S., British and Canadian forces earmarked for use in areas outside of Europe in the event of war.

In conventional forces, the report said the Soviet Union and its six Warsaw Pact allies lead in six of seven basic measurements of conventional war power. It said NATO's only edge is that it has 1,800 helicopters, 800 more than the East Bloc.

But, it added, the Warsaw Pact has a manpower edge of 4 million to 2.6 million and 173 divisions to 84. The pact countries also have about a 3-to-1 superiority in battle tanks, guided anti-tank launchers, armored personnel carriers and artillery and mortars.

The report said NATO's 2,975 European-based aircraft are outnumbered by 7,240 in the East. The study added that the Warsaw Pact has a 6-to-1 lead in interceptors and can reinforce its air strength with 750 combat planes based in the central Soviet Union far faster than the United States could move additional planes across the Atlantic to Europe.